LEVEL ONE

Letter from Taizé

Bimonthly 3.50 FF 4 august - september 1992

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JUL 14 1992

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EUROPEAN MEETING OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN VIENNA
28 December 1992 - 2 January 1993

Free from all narrowness

At the heart of Europe, the city of Vienna is preparing to welcome the tens of thousands of young adults who will come from the four winds for the European meeting.

Until the beginning of this century, Vienna was the crossroads of the peoples of central Europe, a center of sharing and creation. "In Vienna," wrote Stephan Zweig, "the culture was a synthesis of all the Western cultures. Whoever lived and worked there felt free of all narrowness and prejudice. Nowhere was it easier to be European, and I know that I owe it in part to that city that I consider the idea of community to have the highest place in my heart." The Second World War turned Vienna into a border city, just a few short miles from the iron curtain that divided Europe in two; it thus became the first city of welcome for many refugees.

Today, with the urgent need for steps toward reconciliation in a Europe experiencing both the desire for unity and the chaos of wars and nationalism, this European meeting will enable us to share our hopes and our efforts. It will allow us to take part in the searching of many Christians from this key region.

A Church leader in Vienna expressed one aspect of the role of Christians in this way: "Europe is more than a common market. Spiritual forces have also brought its peoples closer. Europe has ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities. Christianity has had in the course of history a great effect of bringing people together. Peoples grew together because a higher scale of values enabled them to look beyond their differences, without abolishing or rejecting them."

The European meeting, with participants being welcomed in families and parishes, will be an opportunity to discover the great diversity that characterizes the Church in Vienna and, as we undertake together this stage of the pilgrimage of trust on earth, to allow a communion to grow stronger. One of those in charge of Caritas explained some facets of the commitment of Christians in Vienna, and the surrounding area, which help to understand the challenges they are attempting to face:

"One of the areas in which we are working more and more is with those who are left out, those who do not manage to adapt. Even in parishes which have started groups that, for example, take care of elderly persons, there are problems in including certain people who are rejected from the outset. Young people are often willing to help but need preparation and supervision by professionals. There are fine projects, for example regarding contacts with prisoners. Some help children from disadvantaged families with their schoolwork. Many other examples could be given, like people who devote part of their vacation to work in camps with handicapped persons.

"The presence of foreigners and refugees is one of the characteristics of Vienna. Our city used to be the gateway for the Eastern bloc countries; now it is still an arrival point for many people looking for better material prospects. There are also the immigrant workers from nearby Turkey and the Balkans, and refugees from the Far East, from Asia, from Africa. They are even more poorly welcomed than usual since, in the present economic situation, they are viewed as a threat to the general prosperity and to employment. The main problem is to keep alive a sense of their dignity so that their basic human rights are recognized and to calm the fears that lead to their exclusion. In this situation, the young are certainly the most open and play an important role in society. They can be a kind of counterbalance with respect to the generation that built modern-day Austria and that now sees the material security of its children threatened. It is important that young people be able to say that they are ready to share, ready to accept and welcome foreigners. Except for the Church, there are very few who have this attitude."

Many people in Vienna ask themselves how they can take part in and support the evolution of Eastern Europe. The border is so close, but there is still the impression of two different worlds.

The European meeting will certainly make a deeper sharing possible, allowing people to discover what is essential and vital in the others and in oneself. Beyond differences of income level and the wounds left by totalitarian regimes, common challenges can be discovered: individualism, the temptation to withdraw into oneself, the search for material possessions above all, the difficulty of finding stable values... And, in quite different contexts, people can be found who are getting ready to take responsibilities in the human family and in the local Church, who are daring to work for reconciliation, to give of themselves on account of Christ.

The European meeting will be an opportunity to celebrate these multiple signs of hope and also to find a kind of new vitality, a solidarity that crosses boundaries, rooted in the communion given by Christ.¶

Sarajevo 1992

Since almost twenty years, young people from what was Yugoslavia have been coming to Taizé and the European meetings, and we go to visit them as well. At the request of young people we know, we have already sent a lorry laden with food to Sarajevo. This will continue in Sarajevo and also in other regions where refugees are to be found.
In order to help with this, and also to support the travel costs of youth from Eastern Europe, contributions can be sent to **OPERATION HOPE.**

UK: "Operation Hope", Bank Account no. 44495090, Coutts and Co., Duncannon Branch, 440 Strand, LONDON WC2R 0QS
USA: "OPERATION HOPE", c/o Taizé, 413 W. 48th St. New York, NY 10036
IRELAND, CANADA, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, SOUTH AFRICA, etc.:
contributions may be sent in the same way as sums for subsciptions to the Letter from Taizé, making sure to indicate with your payment "for Operation Hope".

A new beginning

Living a European Meeting together means, as a personal decision, going to the wellsprings of faith and preparing ways of reconciliation. The entire program, common prayers,reflections on Biblical topics, times of sharing, will help foster this deeper reflection and a new beginning.
An inner preparation is essential. How can we share the best of our life unless we take the time to place our existence before the face of God ? How can we find the strength to overcome prejudices and barriers of all kinds unless we come with a reconciled heart ?

A night of lights

□ During the preparation, a central place will be given to prayer. Regular prayers will create a kind of invisible network across Europe, the extent of which will be revealed at the gathering in Vienna. For some it will mean short prayers, perhaps at the midday break in work or studies. Others will prepare nights of prayer to which they will invite especially young people who have very little contact with faith.
This kind of prayer is a service made up of singing, short Bible readings, prayer intentions and times of silence (suggestions will be given in the next Letter from Taizé). The theme is the centre of our faith : Christ Jesus, the light that comes into the darkness to open a road from death to resurrection, from doubt to faith, from sin to forgiveness, from isolation to communion.
Symbolically, during the celebration each person lights a candle he or she has brought (that is why some call such a celebration a " night of candles ").

A time of silence and sharing

□ Another form of inner preparation is to meet with a few others for a time of silence and sharing in what is called a "Johannine hour." These meetings help to find a space of silence at the heart of the often hectic rhythm of one's form of life.

Going to see witnesses

□ How can we prepare ourselves to discover, through the people we meet, witnesses to the life of Christ today, peacemakers, people who take on responsibilities in the human family, unless we ourselves begin by accepting a service on behalf of others, unless we anticipate the meeting by visiting others close to home ? By visiting during the autumn months people who can witness to a commitment, we discover many signs of hope, sometimes almost invisible ones. In this way we can better understand the diversity and the complementarity that makes up the Body of Christ. Some will note down impressions and images of these meetings in order to bring them to Vienna as a gift.

Being attentive to urgent needs

□ Going towards others also means becoming more attentive to requests and urgent needs. One of the preparation meetings could be devoted to helping people in difficulty.

And a practical preparation

□ The preparation also involves practical questions : in Vienna and the surrounding area it means organizing the hospitality ; and throughout Europe, group travel has to be worked out, by coach or by train. In the next Letter from Taizé, there will be a first list of contact addresses.

Europe

" is more than a common market. Spiritual forces have also brought its peoples closer. Europe has ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities. Christianity has had in the course of history a great effect of bringing people together. Peoples grew together because a higher scale of values enabled them to look beyond their differences, without abolishing or rejecting them. "

Taizé

European Meeting of young adults
28 December 1992 - 2 January 1993

Vienna

Dates: Arrive Monday morning, 28th December 1992 between 7am and 12 noon. Depart Saturday 2nd January 1993.

General Programme: Coming to a European meeting is always a personal choice for those who want to go to the wellsprings of faith, and to search for ways of reconciliation with other young people from all over Europe. For this reason everybody must be motivated enough to take part in the whole rhythm of prayers, meetings and small groups throughout the whole meeting. We will be welcomed by families and local church communities throughout the city. In each neighbourhood there will be a morning prayer, then meetings in small groups and visits to people with an involvement in the local area. Each day there will be two common prayers for everyone in the city-centre ; in the afternoon, workshops on different themes.

Accommodation: Simple conditions. Bring sleeping-bag and lightweight mattress. Groups should not arrange their own accommodation in advance as this detracts from the element of sharing. **18 to 29 year olds:** three different ways of taking part : -- the main group : participation in the life of the parishes of the city. -- the silence group (has its own separate accommodation). -- while still participating in the life of the parishes, helping with practical work for the meeting, or " animation ", or music for the common prayers. To do this, arrive, if possible, on December 26th between 8am and 4pm. It is not possible to arrive on Dec. 27th. **16 to 18 year olds** can only take part if accompanied by a group leader over 20 who stays with them, so they can be divided into small groups of 7 (girls and boys separate) and all participate in the main group (see above) from 28th December on (do not arrive before). **Adults over 30** all participate in the main group (see above) from 28th December on (do not arrive before). Those who cannot stay in the same simple conditions as the young people and need a " real bed " indicate this on their registration form. Those who are accompanying a group of young people are welcome to stay with them if they will accept the same simple accommodation. **Families with children,** and **people with a disability** who need special accommodation should register directly to Taizé -- best by telephone in October or November -- to arrange suitable accommodation.

Your contribution to cost (about £45) covers all meals during the meeting and a public transport pass. An estimate of the contribution expected from each participant will be given in the next edition of the Letter from Taizé.

Travel -- from Britain : 1. Coach. Departure from London, Nuneaton Coaches, Whitacre Road, NUNEATON, CV11 6BN. Tel : (0203) 325682 Fax : (0203) 375875 Further details in future Letter from Taizé. Train : Euroyouth ticket (under 26 yrs.) currently £169 return Air : Many flights available, for example Student Travel Agency (071-581-8873) offer fares : £152 (student), £174 (regular), using DAN-AIR from Gatwick.
2. To arrive on December 26th to help : go with a coach leaving Taizé on Dec. 25th (contact Taizé).
3. -- from other countries : write to Taizé for information.

Send in your registration form by 1st December at the latest. Further information will be sent in November to those who have already registered.

-- Those who live in Britain send their forms to a contact person (see overleaf).

-- Only the following should register directly to Taizé : families with children ; those with special accommodation needs ; anyone living outside Britain. Address : European Meeting, F-71250 Taizé Community. Tel : 85.50.30.02 Fax : 85.50.30.16.

Some young adults from Vienna replied spontaneously to the question : What are your hopes for the meeting in Vienna ?

- "The meeting is coming at the right time, when xenophobia is increasing in certain circles. For the past few months we have been welcoming refugees in our parish. But, with young people from every country, we will better understand that when we welcome others we receive and we are not only the ones who give."
- "It will be important to discover the simplicity of welcoming. We were so touched by our experience in a family in Wroclaw who knew how to welcome us generously with very little. We need that simplicity in the Church too. That is what I find in my parish : it is enough to be there to feel welcome, whether you know how to sing or not, whether you are active or not."
- "I am glad to be able to welcome, after having been welcomed by others elsewhere. I often asked myself if we could do it so well in Vienna ! It's extraordinary to receive a visit. In our parish there is no youth group, so this could be an occasion to begin."
- "It's a real opportunity for our Church, which has been suffering on account of divisions. Welcoming people from everywhere will help us to see beyond our own internal conflicts."
- "I see many young people searching. Just as past meetings helped me, I can imagine that, for them, a way forward will open, a different way of looking at the Church. For once not only the negative aspects will be seen ; we will really be able to celebrate together."

Registration Form

Send in by December 1st either to a contact person (Britain) or (if you live outside Britain) to Taizé. Send to: European meeting, F-71250 TAIZÉ-COMMUNAUTÉ, Tel. (+33) 85 50 30 02 (from 9.30 to 12. and from 14.30 to 18.30), Fax (+33) 85 50 30 16.

First Name:

Family Name:

Address:

(with postcode and country)

Tel.: ...../..... Occupation: ..... Age: .....

(Circle "Yes" or "No" or complete where necessary)

- I am coming with a group from the town of .....
led by .....
- For adults (over 30 years) and those who cannot sleep on the floor:
I need a bed: yes / no If "yes", say whether you are (please circle):
woman man couple family with ... children disabled person with helper
- I will arrive on 28th December: yes / no (arrival time between 7am and 12pm)
- I will arrive on 26th December (17-30 year olds only): yes / no
to help with (please circle): animation / work / music team.
- N.B. If, for any reason, you are arranging your own accommodation please send us the address where you will be staying.
- I would like ..... more registration forms (photocopy your own if possible)

If you asked him, he would give it to you.

(John 4,4-15)

At the hottest hour of the day, Jesus is sitting next to a well. He is alone and thirsty. A woman comes from the nearby town. Jesus has nothing to draw water with, so he says to her, "Give me a drink." "What!" she answers, "You, a Jew, are asking me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" Her surprise at seeing someone who held her people in contempt ask her for a drink is mixed with a touch of malicious pleasure: to have his thirst quenched, it's good for this Jewish man to be at the mercy of a Samaritan woman, of someone whom he probably despises as impure, including even her water jug!

Without being offended, Christ continues the dialogue. He began by asking, and now he suggests that she ask in her turn: "If you knew what God gives, and who it is that says to you "Give me a drink," you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." But the Samaritan woman is wary. She has suffered in her life; she has learned to test any offers. With pride she takes refuge behind the excellent quality of the well, a legacy of the glorious ancestor of her people. She makes fun of Jesus' claim to give her something better: "Could you be greater than our father Jacob?"

But there, without realizing it, she has just asked the real question. Who is this man standing in front of her? Could he in fact perhaps perform a miracle, dig a well and thus make her difficult daily task easier? In fact, when she says that the well is deep, that does not only mean that the water is fresh but also that it is tiring to draw it every day. So she might be missing an opportunity, however uncertain, if she did not pay attention at all to this man. And without fully believing, she expresses her dream: "Give me that water, so that I won't be thirsty any longer and have to journey here to draw." She throws out her request like a challenge. The expression is intentionally provocative, by the use of the same word (in Greek) that was used a few verses earlier (v. 4) to refer to the tiring journey. The Samaritan woman has not understood anything about the fountain of living water that Christ wants to offer her. And yet, even while understanding little and asking in a confused way, the essential has taken place in her. She has come out of her isolation and she has dared to ask, "Give me!" Probably without realizing it, she has repeated the first words Jesus spoke to her.

Halfway between the "give me" of Jesus and the "give me" of the woman, these words are found: "You would have asked him and he would have given you." They are a kind of echo of a well-known saying of Jesus: "Ask and it will be given to you" (Matt 7,7). The story of the Samaritan woman can make these words accessible to us. Is there not in us, so often, a similar hesitation at asking? We have learned to get what we need for ourselves. And other arguments are an impediment to the prayer of petition: If God already knows what I need, won't he give it to me anyway, even without my prayer? And why should I bother God with my troubles, so insignificant when compared with all the suffering in the world?

The deepest reason for the prayer of petition is not our poverty, but a secret of love

Christ, far from being bothered by the request, is thirsting for it. He has a thirst that goes far deeper than the Samaritan woman's water. His thirst is quenched when she begins to ask him for something. God desires to be asked; he "seeks" (v. 23) our prayer and our adoration. "He thirsts for our thirst; he desires to be desired and loves to be loved," according to the admirable expression of a Christian of the seventh century (Maximus the Confessor). When all at once the admission of a longing breaks down the dyke that was holding back the flood of petitions, then prayer flows like a river, perhaps violently, carrying along with it even unenlightened requests and defiant challenges hurled at God. But Christ does not ask us to pray well; he simply asks us to dare to express our need. It is not for nothing that he compares the prayer of petition to a widow pestering a judge who refuses to show her justice (Luke 18,1-8) or to the insolence of a man who wakes up the whole neighboring household in the middle of the night to ask for three loaves of bread (Luke 11,5-8).

The deepest reason for the prayer of petition is not our poverty, but a secret of love. To invite us to pray, God does not begin by proving to us that we are worthless; he reveals his heart. God is filled with a love that gives everything, even when it is not asked for (cf. John 3,16). But there is no true love that does not deeply desire a response. Whoever loves is ready to give, but wishes still more that the beloved look for the lover's gifts and ask him for them. In Christ, the love of God calls out, "Love me; give me your prayer; ask me!" And our heart replies, "Speak to me, my God; give me your love!" The prayer of petition is beautiful like a voice in a dialogue of love. In it, the freedom of the loved one is made manifest.¶

MEDITATING ON THE WORD
SEPTEMBER

These short readings, taken from the midday prayer in Taizé, can be read several times during the day.
The references indicate longer readings. If you have time to read only one, the one in bold type is suggested.

Ep 1.7-10 Lk 4.22-30
1 TUE Through the giving of the life of Christ we gain our freedom, the forgiveness of sins. Such is the richness of God's grace.

Ep 1.11-14 Lk 4.38-41
2 WED In Christ, we have been marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit; this is the pledge for us of the freedom of the people whom God has taken for his own, to the praise of his glory.

Ep 1.15-23 **Lk 4.42-44**
3 THU God has made Christ the head of the Church, which is his Body completely filled by him. And he himself is filled by God in every way.

Ep 2.1-6 **Lk 5.1-11**
4 FRI God is rich in merciful love. Because of the great love he has for us, he has brought us to life with Christ.

Ep 2.7-10 **Lk 5.12-16**
5 SAT It is by grace that you have been saved, through faith. And this salvation does not come from you, it is the gift of God.

Lk 14.25-33 Ws 9.13-18
6 SUN Jesus said: Whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

Ep 2.11-13 Lk 5.17-26
7 MON In Christ Jesus, you who were far away have been brought close.

Mt 1.18-23 Rm 8.28-30
8 TUE The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Emmanuel, a name which means "God-with-us".

Ep 2.14-18 Lk 5.33-39
9 WED Christ is our peace. He has broken down the dividing wall of hostility between the peoples and reconciled them to God, through the cross. In his own person, he has destroyed hatred.

Lk 6.6-11 Ep 2.19-22
10 THU Jesus said to the man with a withered hand, "Stretch out your hand." The man did so, and his hand was restored.

Ep 3.1-6 **Lk 6.12-19**
11 FRI The mystery of Christ is that all peoples now share the same inheritance, being members of one body, and having received the same promise in Christ Jesus, through the Gospel.

Lk 6.20-23 Ep 3.7-13
12 SAT Looking at his disciples, Jesus said: Happy are you who are poor, the kingdom of God is yours.

Lk 15.11-32 1 Tm 1.12-17
13 SUN The father of the prodigal son said to his elder son, "It is only right that we should celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!"

Ph 2.6-11 **Jn 3.13-21**
14 MON Taking the nature of a servant, Christ became as human beings are. And he humbled himself still further, being obedient to the point of death, and death on a cross. Therefore God has exalted him, and has given him the name that is above all other names.

2 Co 1.3-5 Lk 6.27-35
15 TUE Blessed be God who consoles us in all our afflictions. For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ.

Lk 6.36-38 Ep 4.7-10
16 WED Jesus said: Give, and it will be given to you. A full measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For the measure you use will be the measure used for you.

Ep 4.11-13 Lk 6.39-45
17 THU God's people is being prepared for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, fully mature with the fullness of Christ himself.

Lk 6.46-49 Ep 4.14-16
18 FRI Jesus said: Whoever comes to me, listens to my words and acts on them is like someone building a house who digs down deep and lays the foundations on rock.

Ep 4.22-24 **Lk 7.1-10**
19 SAT Let yourselves be made new in the attitude of your minds to be clothed with the new self, which is created to be like God in justice and in holiness of the truth.

1 Tm 2.1-8 **Mk 9.30-37**
20 SUN There is only one God, and there is only one mediator between God and humanity, Christ Jesus, himself a human being, who gave himself for all.

Mt 9.9-13 Ep 4.1-6
21 MON St MATTHEW As he walked, Jesus saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, "Follow me". And he got up and followed him.

Lk 7.11-17 Ep 4.25-30
22 TUE The people said of Jesus, "A great prophet has risen up among us; God has visited his people."

Ep 4.32-5.2 Lk 7.18-23
23 WED Forgive one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Ep 5.8-14 Lk 7.24-28
24 THU You have become light in the Lord. Live as children of the light.

Lk 7.36-50 Ep 5.17-20
25 FRI Jesus said to a woman, "Your sins are forgiven." Those who were present began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" But Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Ep 6.10-20 Lk 8.4-8
26 SAT Draw your strength from God's power. Clothe yourself with the armour of God so that you can resist the tactics of the spirit of evil.

1 Tm 6.11-16 **Mt 21.28-32**
27 SUN Paul writes to Timothy: Fight the good fight of faith and win the eternal life to which you were called.

Lk 8.11-15 Ezk 3.10-15
28 MON Jesus said: The seed is the word of God. The seed that falls on good soil, this is people who live according to the word and yield a rich harvest because they persevere.

Dn 7.13-14 **Jn 1.47-51**
29 TUE Daniel said: In a vision I saw one like a son of man, to whom were given authority, glory and sovereign power, and all the nations and peoples of every tongue worshipped him. His kingdom is everlasting, it will never pass away.

Ezk 11.17-20 Lk 8.19-21
30 WED The Lord says: I will give an undivided heart to my people. I will put a new spirit in them.

JOHANNINE HOURS

MATTHEW 18,1-5

Johannine hours are meant as a way of seeking God in silence and prayer in the midst of our daily life. During the course of a day, take an hour or so to read the Bible passage with the short commentary and to reflect on the questions which follow. Afterwards, a group of 3 to 10 people can meet to share what they have discovered and perhaps for a time of prayer.

«Who is greatest in the Kingdom of God?" The disciples asked Jesus this question spontaneously. It happens to us too that our relationships are characterized by a desire for competition. So Jesus calls a little child and sets him in the midst of them. By this gesture, and the accompanying explanation ("Whoever makes themselves little like that child is the greatest"), he wants to tell us that in the communion of the Church our relationships can be transformed. It is as if Jesus said: you don't have to fight against or deny the desire to be the greatest. No, those who want to be greatest will let all their energies be changed, not to burden others or to affirm themselves, but to be less, to be small (v.4), to bear others even in their weaknesses. This "littleness" has nothing to do with feelings of inferiority, but it is God's own way of loving, giving without protection and without conditions.

Jesus adds, "Whoever welcomes a child like this one in my name, welcomes me." This must have been something totally new for the disciples: God's authentic representative is a child! Welcoming a child, letting a child take the central place, considering first of all the one who has nothing to give, as Jesus did: all this is a way of making God's love present.

This communion of welcome is the Church. It is not a fellowship of people who are perfect, who have "made it," but in it we can welcome one another with empty hands, like children.

- What helps me to find a spirit of childhood in communion with others, beyond the spirit of competition or the need to make comparisons?

- How can we find in the Church the freshness of that communion where Christ always welcomes us as we are, as his children?

MEDITATING ON THE WORD

OCTOBER

These short readings, taken from the midday prayer in Taizé, can be read several times during the day. The references indicate longer readings. If you have time to read only one, the one in bold type is suggested.

Ezk 12.21-28 Lk 8.22-25
1 THU The days are coming when every vision will be fulfilled and there will be no more futile visions or deceptive prophecies, since I, the Lord shall speak what I will. And what I say will come true without delay.

Ezk 16.60-63 Lk 8.43-48
2 FRI The Lord says to his people : I shall re-establish my covenant with you and you will know that I am God. In your confusion you will be reduced to silence when I forgive you for everything you have done.

Lk 8.49-56 Ezk 17.20-24
3 SAT They came to say to the synagogue ruler, "Your daughter is dead." But Jesus heard and said to him, "Do not be afraid, only have faith and she will be safe."

Hab 1.2-2.4 **Lk 17.5-10**
4 SUN I shall stay awake, watching to see what God will say to me. And the Lord answered me and said, "The just will live by their faithfulness."

Ezk 18.27-32 Lk 9.1-6
5 MON The Lord says : I take no pleasure in the death of anyone. Turn to me and live !

Lk 9.10-17 Ezk 34.11-12
6 TUE Taking the five loaves and two fish and looking up to heaven, Jesus said the blessing over them ; then he broke them and handed them to his disciples to distribute among the people. They all ate as much as they wanted.

Ezk 34.12-16 **Lk 9.18-22**
7 WED The Lord says : I will take care of my flock. I shall look for the lost sheep, bring back the strays, bandage the injured and strengthen the sick. I shall watch over the one that is healthy and strong.

Lk 9.23-24 Ezk 34.23-31
8 THU Jesus said : Whoever wants to be a follower of mine must renounce themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

Ezk 36.24-28 Lk 9.28-36
9 FRI The Lord says : I will give you a new heart. I will remove the heart of stone from your bodies and give you a heart of flesh. I shall put my Spirit in you.

Ezk 37.1-14 Lk 9.38-45
10 SAT The Lord says : You will know that I am the Lord when I open your graves and make you rise up from them.

Lk 17.11-19 2 K 5.14-17
11 SUN To the Samaritan who returned to thank Jesus for healing him, Jesus said : Rise and go. Your faith has saved you.

Ezk 37.23-28 **Lk 9.46-50**
12 MON The Lord says : I shall make a covenant of peace with my people, and it will be an eternal covenant. I shall set my sanctuary among them for ever.

Lk 9.57-62 Ezk 39.27-39
13 TUE Someone said to Jesus, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus answered, "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."

Lk 10.1-9 Ezk 43.4-7
14 WED Jesus said to his disciples : Whenever you go into a town where they make you welcome, eat what is set before you ; cure the sick who are there and say, "The kingdom of God is very near you."

Lk 10.17-24 Ezk 47.1-12
15 THU Turning to his disciples, Jesus said : Blessed are the eyes that see what you see !

Dn 3.51-90 Lk 10.25-28
16 FRI Bless the Lord, you who are holy and humble in heart, praise and glorify him forever ! For he has rescued us from the hand of death.

Lk 10.29-37 Dn 7.17-29
17 SAT Having told the parable of the good Samaritan, Jesus asked the teacher of the law, "Who showed themselves to be a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers ?" He replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

2 Tm 3.14-4.2 **Mk 10.35-45**
18 SUN St. Paul writes to Timothy : Proclaim the Word, in season and out of season.

Rm 1.8-17 **Lk 10.38-42**
19 MON Paul writes : The Gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who has faith.

Rm 4.13-25 **Lk 11.1-4**
20 TUE God gives life to the dead and calls into existence what does not yet exist.

Rm 5.1-5 Lk 11.9-13
21 WED Our hope will not let us down, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.

Rm 5.6-11 Lk 11.14-20
22 THU While we were still powerless, at the time chosen by God, Christ died for those who were without God.

Rm 6.4-6 Lk 12.6-12
23 FRI Buried with Christ in baptism, we live a new life with him.

Lk 12.13-21 Rm 6.8-11
24 SAT Jesus said : Be on your guard against every kind of greed ; for a person's life does not consist in the abundance of their possessions.

Lk 18.9-14 Si 35.12-18
25 SUN In a parable, Jesus said that the one who prayed saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner", went home forgiven.

Lk 12.22-31 Rm 6.12-14,22-23
26 MON Jesus said : Seek first God's Kingdom, and all other things will be given to you as well.

Lk 12.32-34 Rm 7.4-6
27 TUE Jesus said : Give to those in need. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure that will not fail, in heaven where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Lk 12.35-40 Ep 2.19-22
28 WED Jesus said : Be like people waiting for their master to return, ready to open the door as soon as he comes and knocks.

Rm 8.1-4 Lk 12.49-50
29 THU Paul writes : The law of the Spirit, which gives life in Christ Jesus, has set you free from the law of sin and death.

Rm 8.5-11 Lk 13.6-9
30 FRI The Spirit seeks life and peace.

Rm 8.14-17 Lk 13.10-17
31 SAT Paul writes : You did not receive a spirit which makes you a slave to fear again ; you received the spirit of sonship by which we cry out, "Abba ! Father !"

JOHANNINE HOURS

GALATIANS 5,13-25

Johannine hours are meant as a way of seeking God in silence and prayer in the midst of our daily life. During the course of a day, take an hour or so to read the Bible passage with the short commentary and to reflect on the questions which follow. Afterwards, a group of 3 to 10 people can meet to share what they have discovered and perhaps for a time of prayer.

At the heart of the Gospel is found freedom. The presence of the Holy Spirit liberates human beings from all kinds of determinisms to make them people who find their identity in their relationship to God alone (cf. Gal 1,10). In his Letter to the Galatians, Saint Paul is writing to people who confuse the liberty of the Spirit with a life with no reference-points, and he tries to deepen their understanding of this fundamental reality.

The Spirit is the source of freedom, the apostle tells them, but this freedom has nothing automatic about it. We need to make a choice, to live according to this Spirit who is in us. In Paul's language, we must "walk according to the Spirit" (v.16 ; cf. v.25 ; Rom 8,4). Otherwise, we fall prey to what Paul calls a "life according to the flesh" (Rom 8,4-9) this obscure expression stands for a life without reference to God, closed to the help of God's vivifying and unifying love. Such a life can lead only to division and dispersion.

In fact, freedom is never found in a pure state ; every way of life has its consequences. To the "works of the flesh," Paul contrasts "the fruit of the Spirit" (v.22), a single, many-sided reality : love, peace, goodness, trust, and so on. That is where true freedom is found, for such a life is creative ; it does not lead to sterile isolation but engenders and unites. To enter it, one road : cross over with Christ from death to life (v.24), consent to the impulses of his Spirit at work in us (v.18,25).

- How can we "live according to the Spirit" in the concrete circumstances of our life ? How can we "serve others by love ?"
- In what way is the Gospel a source of freedom for me ?

An experience of trust

In this city marked by divisions and isolation, the hospitality shown by families and parishes was one of the most beautiful surprises for the participants.

Coming as pilgrims from across the North American continent, some after several days on the road, thousands of young adults gathered in the city of Dayton, Ohio, for four days. With empty hands, but with a great deal to share, they set out towards one another. They wanted to create trust "where there is plenty of reason for withholding trust," said the archbishop of Cincinnati, president of the US Catholic Bishops' Conference, "plenty of reason for building walls around ourselves within which to take a posture of solitary defiance."

Like pilgrims attentive to those whom God places on their road, they discovered, sometimes with surprise, a whole people on the march: "In prayer we met each other; we met each other too in the welcome of good people who took us into their hearts and homes," wrote a young woman from India. "Almost every person one meets is like a long lost friend. There is the delighted surprise when we heard countless variations of our own story and we were assured of God's presence. Despite our diversity, a common refrain to .be heard is the astonished "You too!?"

> "Jesus, your light is shining within us; let not my doubts and my darkness speak to me. What Christ asks above all is for us to abandon ourselves to the humble trusting of faith and to welcome his love. The Christian calling is so beautiful that it is not possible to run away from it, wrote a believer in the second century. Run away from what? Run away from the reconciliations so vital today throughout the human family."

In this city marked by divisions and isolation, the hospitality shown by families and parishes was one of the most beautiful surprises for the participants. More than fifty parishes welcomed people in families. Often for the first time in their life, African-American families offered hospitality in their homes to European Americans, to Canadians. They were astonished to find they had so much in common as members of one human family. The inhabitants of Dayton felt motivated to "cross the bridges" that mark the divisions of the city in both a literal and symbolic sense: "Till now, we welcomed only people who were like us, from our own church. I have understood that to be a Christian we have to go toward others, even if it's not easy." And those who came from the inner cities, African Americans and Hispanics, asked themselves: "How can we bring this message to the young people of our neighborhood? How can we invite them to share in this way? That's what they're looking for to be welcomed, to have the sense of a common future, of belonging to the same family."

During the days in Dayton, you could understand well the impulse that leads people to set out in response to the phrase of a second-century Christian, often quoted by Brother Roger during the meeting: "The Christian calling is so beautiful that it is not possible to run away from it..." In a society split into so many small pieces, Christians can be a ferment of reconciliation.

Another aspect of the Christian calling became clear especially during the intercultural forum held the next-to-last day. This meeting was very authentic; none of the problems of American society were avoided. A young man spoke about what it means to be black today in a poor area of a large city. "Our society is dominated by fear," continued an African-American priest from Cleveland. Young Hispanics, a native American and a group from Mexico also came up to the microphone. What was striking about all these presentations was that the problems were never mentioned in a tone of despair or resignation. Does not the calling of Christians imply the responsibility of sustaining hope in the human family? And does not this hope make us wish to be among those who build?

"What do we learn from the fact that several thousand North Americans are making a commitment to reconciliation in the very month that the major US image has been the Los Angeles riot? Is it possible, as we analyze how to deal with America's economic and ethnic differences, that some powerful answers are here in this gathering in Dayton?" reflected a university professor upon seeing the thousands of young adults gathered for prayer three times a day, from every racial and denominational background, speaking different languages.

In the large fieldhouse arranged as a

place of prayer, all the participants gathered around the brothers and the singing went on and on, sometimes alternating with songs of the African-American tradition. The silence at the heart of the common prayer was another way of deepening communion by listening to God together. In the evening, the prayer seemed as if it would never end and you could feel, particularly in the prayer around the cross, how the desire for reconciliation was rooted in a living relationship with Christ.

To accompany each person in the pilgrimage of trust that he or she continues after the gathering in Dayton, Brother Roger wrote this short text that everyone received before leaving: "Jesus, your light is shining within us; let not my doubts and my darkness speak to me. What Christ asks above all is for us to abandon ourselves to the humble trusting of faith and to welcome his love. The Christian calling is so beautiful that it is not possible to run away from it, wrote a believer in the second century. Run away from what? Run away from the reconciliations so vital today throughout the human family."

A Pilgrim's Notes

The following text was written by a young minister of an African-American congregation in North Carolina:

"I arrived in Dayton after a frightening flight with many mixed emotions. I had never attended an ecumenical meeting before and yet my soul was searching for something to grasp. I registered with many other young adults from various parts of the world: from the United States, Canada, and from different European countries as well. The orientation period went well, but my soul still felt uneasy.

That same night we had our first common prayer. An experience different from the Afro-American culture. A worship gathering so new that it took moments to collect my inner soul. A Christ painted on the cross in the center captured the attention of all who worshipped. The Crucifix deepened my heart as well as the hearts of others. As praises were sung unto Christ, a beacon of light illuminated in my eyes as we sang, "Jesus your light is shining within us, let not my doubts or my darkness speak to me."

"During the moment of silence, the God that came with me on the plane from little old Greenville, North Carolina allowed me to reaffirm my belief: one faith, one Lord, one baptism. First fear had overshadowed me; but fear was gone. Doubt tugged at my soul; but doubt went away. As unfamiliar as the worship experience was, I could acknowledge the presence of my God in the place. 700 miles from my security, I experienced a prayer vigil with people from all over the world. Men and women, young adults and children who spoke languages unfamiliar to my ear, though in spirit and truth they were my own equal.

Together, background differences refrained from being important. Singular interest of searching for salvation, reconciliation, renewal and beginning had the attention. I wish many more people, especially Afro-Americans, could share in this experience where the cross of Christ is the focal point of the entire meeting. Desperately, the United States needs such experiences. We need to destroy the existing barriers in culture, society and race if we plan to grow and do great things in Christ.

"The Dayton gathering opened my eyes to the necessity of silence. Psalm 46:10 has more meaning when I read, "Be still and know that I am God." Another important thing for me was the experience of trust. While there, I resided with a family whose beliefs and ideas were different than my own. I worshipped with people I had never seen. Thus God spoke to me and said if you can trust people you do not know why can't you trust the spirit within you to operate more effectively in the Body of Christ?

The Sunday after my return to my parish, relying on the spirit within for guidance, I began to witness to a fuller trust as a result of my experience."¶

listening to the continents

Budapest

The experience continues

A few months after the European meeting, the experience of hospitality, sharing and searching is continuing for many in their parishes. In several districts, the young people had noticed to what extent elderly persons had been touched by welcoming others in their homes. Seeing their solitude, they are continuing to visit them regularly.

In one parish, as they continue to reflect on the Letter from the Philippines, young people have decided that for them a priority was to make contact with poor and homeless people, who are more and more numerous. In one village, some young people with their priest visit a prison regularly, bringing an icon of the cross for prayer.

In the villages around Budapest, where so many of the participants had been warmly welcomed, the pilgrimage continues as well. An icon of the cross is making its way through several villages, an occasion for prayers involving all the generations. Young people from Budapest are still visiting villages where sometimes the people feel isolated.

For many the prayer had been the most powerful part of the European meeting, and that is continuing as well. In almost every sector of the city a regular prayer is being held, in one or several churches. And the daily prayer which began during the preparation continues to take place in a church in the centre of the city.

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Lettre 165 - DRA Comm. de Taizé - Com. par. 50795 - DL 764
Ateliers et Presses de Taizé